

BRIANKERSHISNIK: 'NATIVITY' PAINTER DISCUSSES ART



KRISTIN MURPHY, DESERET NEWS

Brian Kershnik poses for a photo in front of his painting, "Nativity," at the BYU Museum of Art in Provo on Friday.

Artist recalls being 'scared to death'

■ **BY LEE BENSON**
DESERET NEWS

PROVO — The security guard's name was Jeff, and he was moving fast.

He was at one end of the Museum of Art on the Brigham Young University campus when he noticed out of the corner of his eye a man in blue jeans, shirt tail

out, sunglasses perched atop his head, scruffy beard, getting a little too up close and personal with a painting.

And not just any painting, but the celebrated "Nativity," painted by Brian Kershnik when he was a visiting professor at BYU in 2006.

The scene is of the baby Jesus lying in a manger, surrounded by Mary and Jo-

seph, two other women, and a dog — and all of them surrounded by numerous angels, crowding around, in various stages of awe and wonder, to witness the blessed event.

It took Kershnik the entire semester — and the following summer — to paint "Nativity." He'd had no idea what he would paint when he first tacked up the huge

canvas in a narrow studio next to his classroom and announced to his students he was going to create something ambitious and challenged them to do the same.

Then, for days on end, he stared at the white space as it stared back at him.

"I was scared to death," he

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